

Moderates, government react to Panther S

The murder of two Black Panthers by Chicago police has set in motion a reaction that last week reached into the highest levels of the U.S. government.

As the public outcry by black militants and moderate black leaders intensified, the Justice Department Dec. 12 ordered a preliminary investigation into the Chicago shootings of Fred Hampton, the Illinois chairman of the Black Panther party and Mark Clark, a Peoria Panther leader.

Meanwhile, a number of national figures, including a former Supreme Court justice and a former Attorney General, were expected to head a "national commission of inquiry" into the deaths of Black Panthers and "alleged" police harassment of the Black Panther party.

The Justice Department's announcement that the Civil Rights Division of the department would investigate followed requests for such a study by Roy Wilkins, executive director of the NAACP, Whitney Young Jr., head of the Urban League, John Gwynn, president of the Illinois

NAACP and Thomas Picou, managing editor of the Chicago Defender, a black Chicago newspaper.

Many black radicals expressed the conviction such an investigation would be a whitewash, aimed at defusing tensions in the black ghettos—especially in Chicago—heightened by the slayings.

Earlier in the week nine Congressmen urged President Nixon to extend the life of the National Violence Commission to investigate the Panther killings. Nixon ignored the requests.

An independent investigation by some 30 moderate organizations was announced Dec. 12 by Jack Greenberg, director-counsel of the NAACP Legal Defense and Education Fund. The New York Times reported Dec. 13 that Wilkins and Arthur Goldberg, former Supreme Court Justice, would be co-chairmen of the organization and that Ramsey Clark, former Attorney General, would be a member of its board of directors.

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